A response to a fatwa by Islamqa.com concerning the beard

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Islamqa states in one of their fatwas:

> It is waajib [obligatory] to let the beard grow, and shaving it is haraam [forbidden]. Imaam Ahmad, al-Bukhaari, Muslim and others narrated from Ibn Umar [may Allaah be pleased with him and his father] that the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] said: "Be different from the mushrikeen: let your beards grow and trim your moutsaches." Ahmad and Muslim reported from Abu Hurayrah [may Allaah be pleased with him] that the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] said: "Cut your moustaches and let your beards grow: be different from the Magians." Persisting in shaving one's beard is a major sin [kabeerah] ; the one who does this should be advised against it, and his action should be denounced, especially if he is in a position of religious leadership. The idea of being different from the Magians and other mushrikeen does not mean being different from them in every single thing, particularly if they happen to be doing something righteous or good in accordance with the fitrah [natural inclinations of man]. What is meant is that we should be different from them in matters where they have gone astray and deviated from the truth and the dictates of the fitrah, and gone against the way of the Prophets and Messengers by shaving their beards. We should differ from them in this case by letting our beards grow and cutting our moustaches, following the guidance of the Prophets and Messengers, and in accordance with the fitrah. It is proven that the Messenger of Allaah [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] said: "Ten things are part of the fitrah: cutting the moustache, letting the beard grow, cleaning the teeth with a siwaak, rinsing the nose with water, cutting one's nails, washing between the finger-joints, plucking the armpit hairs, shaving the pubic hair and cleaning one's private parts with water." [Reported by Ahmad, Muslim and the four authors of *Sunan*, from the hadeeth of 'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her]. Even if the kaafiroon start letting their beards grow, this does not mean that the Muslims are allowed to shave theirs, ecause as we have stated above, the idea is not to be different from them in everything, only in the things in which they have deviated from the truth and from the fitrah [1]

Response

The above explenation is incorrect for the next reasons:

1:

The hadith: "*Act differently from the polytheists, trim closely the moustache and grow the beard*" [Muslim 2 / 500] . does not indicate that acting differently from the disbelievers in this issue and in similar issues, which have no connection with their faith, is an obligation. It is rather a "mandub" action, and it falls in line with the Messenger of Allah's saying, "*The Jews and the Christians do not dye their hair, thus act differently from them*." [Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3275]. Despite this, some of the Sahabah and the generation after them did not dye their hair [see Shayk Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, "*The Lawfull and the Prohibited in Islam"* , p.96]. This indicates that the imperative tense used here, does not necessarily indicate an obligation, otherwise none of the Sahabah would have disobeyed. Further dying one's hair is recommened because it makes one look "different" from the Jews and Christians [not because "not dying one's hair" is an evil thing or deviation from the truth] . Therefor Muslims are also recommended to grow their beards and trim their moustaches in order to "*look different*" from the pagans , *this is clearly the reason* behind the statement of the Prophet. There is not a single hadith in which the Prophet [saaws] says anything like "*do not act against the fitrah, let your beards grow and trim your moustaches*". Contrary the Prophet [saaws] clearly pointed out that *Muslims are recommended* to grow their beards and trim their moustaches in order "*to be*" or "*look*" different from the pagans.

2:

As for the hadith: "Ten things are part of the fitrah.." , fitrah means "sunnah" here. Al-Nisa'i has actually related the same hadith but with the wordings, "Ten are the acts of the Sunnah..." Ibn `Abbas reported, "These ten acts of fitra had been obligatory in the Shari'ah of Ibrahim and became Sunnah in our Shari'ah." Then he narrated the hadith. The hadith in question also mentions the use of the "miswak" and the "removal of hair under the armpits". However as we know none of these acts have been made compulsory in the Shari'ah. For this reason one cannot proof from this hadith that growing the beard is an obligation. The hadith actually supports the view that growing the beard is a recommendation [a good sunnah]. It would be absurd to argue that a person who does not shave his pubic hair commits a sin [since this is also an act against the fitrah - sunnah]. Therefor it's also "*incorrect"* to argue that shaving of the beard is a sin becausee it is an act against the fitrah-sunnah. The hadith in question does not support this view, nor does it support the view that *growing the beard and trimming the moustache* is an obligation.

References and Notes:

[1]

Fatwa by Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid, source